

Culture Blocks Consciousness

This latest challenge for me is to explore in what ways the influence of living in my birth culture, this being the United States, with its unlimited push for material accumulation, military might, instantaneous satisfaction, and e-relationships places barriers inhibiting people like me from living more fully in a State of Consciousness.

In my experience Consciousness, or what may be termed as advancing Enlightenment, has something to do with a lived state of increased Awareness. To me this means that I am consciously aware of the cultural and personal filtering so that in my decision making I proceed with my eyes wide open to different points of view. This provides me with an overview that enhances my process of taking steps to achieve a desired set of beneficial outcomes for me and others.

In looking at the effort to evolve spiritually through this journey it has been a struggle due to the less than supportive social context within which I have lived. Being a Jew, reformed as can be, but a Jew nonetheless, and as Judaism is so often viewed as a culture of its own I live within the current moment and the memories of past generations. Given the manner in which people in Europe and those who emigrated from Europe have historically viewed Jews as less than human if not actually demons, I have difficulty dealing with the European influenced American arrogance in its declaration as to the ordained supremacy of its Christian spiritual teachings of Love and Acceptance. This is primarily due to my perception that paradoxically, this arrogance is so fragile and insecure that “we” as a society have to reinforce it constantly. This brings about the necessity to subconsciously live in a constant state of hype-vigilance and anxiety about “them” coming to get us, if not the Chinese and Russians then Islamic terrorists, the illegal immigrants, and for the middle and more so the upper class, of course the millions of American poor and the homeless. In my experience the poor generally share more intimately than those who have accumulated more. The poor will share a meal with a neighbor, provide a place to sleep if their neighbor loses their apartment, and provide a ride if they have the ability to help a neighbor go for medical treatment. Then there is the impression that when those with more do donate they typically do so in a hands-off attitude. This means that they donate to an organization that then delivers some level of service. In this way these donors do not have to personally engage with the recipient. This is sad.

It seems that the more one accumulates the further they remove themselves from those with less. This progression of distancing continues until the wealthy end up living in a prison of fear where they incarcerate themselves within gated communities with a guard at the gate and install burglar alarms throughout their home requiring a password to even go downstairs once activated because of the pressure plate alarm at the bottom of the stairs. Because the accumulators are the leaders and role setters for society, the fear that permeates them if not already at a state of paranoia, is nonetheless a cancer eating away at our democratic egalitarian foundation of strength. As a result of the adult polarization between those who have a lot and those just getting by or not even getting by, results in resentment on both sides. This is so prevalent that life has become so threatening to the American young that they have become the proverbial ostrich with their heads buried in the sand of online video games and cell phone chats that are so addictive that they are consuming our youth. In addition, due to their almost complete

alienation from the adult view of life, they have even reframed the whole concept of friends to be the e-relationships of Facebook where they have come to believe that friendship with e-people is equal to the “Old School” face-to-face intimate contacts. For such a loving message of inclusiveness as represented by the Statue of Liberty something has flipped.

Now we live under the cloud of a guilt ridden religious politics with fear and punishment being a life long threat leading to The Final Judgment that offers no rebuttal or defense even while we proudly declare that such a form of justice is a basic human right as evidenced by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. How do people cope with such paradoxes besides culturing a sophisticated castle of denial and rationalization? Where is there room for honest and deep dialogue on the subject of what is really going on without the onus of blaming the other side for all the problems? How does one gain a spiritual strength to even hazard such an attempt? Who of the younger generation is even willing to relate to people who are older and more experienced in the struggle to maintain a sense of individual integrity? Who of these elders are not dismissed with the buzzword, “Old School?”

In this state of denial we endlessly push military technology and then in our paranoid state we over react to conflict and then exercise our strength in an infantile manner indiscriminately using our hammer to smash and pulverize with no consideration to the fallout from societies who experience our impulsive behavior. We are of course stunned and shocked when they stand up for their own cultural values. We proclaim our innocence as they muster what physical defenses they can given their limited or even non-existent military capability. Their defense is not like us from afar, but rather is very intimate in the closeness of their willingness to martyr themselves as they strike with a knife or push the button that detonates their body wrapped bomb. Yes, bloody in small numbers compared to our mass devastations of civilian life wherever people don't do, as we want them to. I guess this is what it takes to get our attention to life's vulnerabilities.

Reading this back to myself, it sounds pretty pessimistic and disenchanting. But, even with this view of our American culture, I still hold onto a vision of inclusivity that to me represents the intention of the Founding Group of enlightened individuals who wrote the Declaration of Independence. The most relevant gift growing up in America is that while the dominant culture rules, there are nonetheless so many immigrants from other countries that just by getting to know a few of them has exposed their cultures to me. Their difference in appearance and the way they speak English is attractive and draws me to them. Meeting the array of people who carry their foreign cultures into the U.S.A. feels like to me somewhat like meandering through a library and at whim picking books from the shelf to see if there is anything besides the cover that is attractive. No, this is not living within their culture yet it does provide me with aspects of life with which I previously had no knowledge. In such a meeting I got into India spirituality and Hinduism.

Being a musician of sorts, the classical music of India resonated with my core. A way into a man's heart is through the food and when I ate my first chapatti, samosa, Tandoori chicken, mango chutney and vegetable curie, well that was it! I was also turned on by classical dance which to observe took me to another universe. As I got deeper into Indian culture I was particularly fascinated by Hinduism and the concept of Yoga with its pathway to Self-Realization or Enlightenment. Whereas in the American culture it feels

to me that dying and death is unacceptable and we feel a compulsion to do anything to avoid it, in Indian culture there is not just an acceptance, but a pathway that leads to a way of embracing it in a good way. It seems that the Hindu culture's spiritual philosophy is broken into life stages. From childhood one typically enters into a stage termed Householder in which one marries, has family, supports the family and encourages the growth and prosperity of one's children. As the children enter adulthood the parents enter into the later stages of life that supports a focus on entering into a state that supports the gradual dropping off of the materialistic cloak of a householder. As the responsibilities of maintaining the family diminish the couple is able to mature into the final period of life and as an elder they now can seek to live in such a way as to permit a fuller awareness of the transience of life. To wake up one day to consciously make the choice that today is a good day to just step out of the body and merge into the Great Life is so cool. This culture seems to feel that to choose to experience the final stage of life in this manner is a natural and elevating experience as it promotes a conscious transition from the physical life, while enhancing what is experienced as increased Enlightenment of the Cycle of Life. I like this option.

Without even being exposed to foreign cultures, sadly the most foreign of cultures to non-indigenous Americans is the one most native to the U.S.A. During the 60's I was blessed to come into contact with the cultures of indigenous people and the ones hidden within our homeland, the Native Americans. The beauty of indigenous cultures is their commonality in their spiritual relationship with the Earth and the knowledge that all elements of our planet are alive and related. This knowledge acted as a light that guided me into the interior of The Truth of living in this land, America. Their knowledge that Nature is our Mother is not a belief, rather it is a life style of appreciation and veneration. Increasingly I have come to incorporate some things about various tribal life, especially those that relate to how some of them used to live in the later stage of life. I became aware that within certain plain tribes of Native Americans that there once existed the proposition that toward the end of life in an ultimate act of Free Will and Choice old warriors might wake up one morning, look at each other's withering bodies and feeling the aches of age agree, "This is a good day to die." With smiles on their faces these old men painted their faces for war, gathered their weapons, and mounting their horses they road to the closest enemy camp. Upon a rise, not far from their enemy's camp they dismounted and tied a leg to stakes they pounded into the ground and then gave rise to shouted insults. The enemy braves seeing and hearing this challenge road forth and the old men singing their death songs with gusto were able to die as men. This really stuck with me. The choice of when and how to transition is so attractive. I kept exploring their cultural values and skill that would allow them to have such a life that they allow this level of choice.

Looking ever deeper then into my own culture I was discouraged. Counter to the liberating manner in which these two cultures deal with death and dying is the depressing approach taken in the Western One God religiosity in which choosing the day and manner in which to transition is viewed as a sin. This element of Free Will and Choice has been stripped out of our culture and in its place is a cultural compulsion that creates a frantic emphasis on holding onto the materialistic cloak with as much resistance as is possible as if this would provide some kind of barrier to the transition from the physical plane of existence. When one looks at the life progression so focused on extending life,

which requires the taking of all sorts of pills to reregulate the bio-system, well, sadly people just end up strung out on medication to mask their ever increasing physical suffering and the loss of personality as the brain's ability to remember and process increasingly diminishes. To me, such a focus on extending life demeans the whole spiritual journey into the next phase of life.

I guess having been exposed and practiced various aspects of Eastern and Native American Philosophy as described above, I have come to be somewhere within these realms of consciousness and this has allowed me to create a filter to my culture's compulsion to accumulate and to do anything to extend life. This provides a certain degree of freedom for me to explore the state of detachment that comes with being liberated from the culture's hold, yet without cutting off all cultural and social ties. In this way I am able to develop and maintain some free will and choice in the face of the spiritually emasculating American cultural compulsions.

I would like to share more about this. In this effort I feel that I need to look at the inner core of consciousness and this effort will be introspective in and retrospective of my journey with what I call Truth, which to me is the foundation of Consciousness. In this endeavor I feel that a quasi-outline form will be helpful to me and hopefully to you the reader.

A. Truth: A Platform for Consciousness

1. The Varied Elements of Truth

a. Ideally, Truth to Humans is Sacred.

b. At my level of development, Truth is at best a Transitional Statement of the synthesis of Various Perspectives, which I recognize as being always a partial view of the Whole and in which the inclusion of further perspectives as they are encountered are welcomed.

c. In coming to understand elements of The Truth I have come to incorporate the recognition that Human Truth is a resident of only the Human Dimension and because in my experience there exists a seemingly Infinite number of other Dimensions, Truth in the Human Dimension is only a Partial Aspect of the Wholeness of Truth, which hopefully incorporates All Dimensions.

During my 30's and early 40's I spent time with various spiritual teachers directly in their presence and through extensive reading of the writings of those whom had either already passed on or were outside my ability to visit. Regardless of their culture, one of the coherent aspects of their sharing, which I came to accept, is that the prime requisite to the first step into a Lived Consciousness is Honesty. This resonated within me to such a degree that I made a strong effort to integrate it as my prime filter of correct thought, feelings and behavior. However, I continue to struggle in this effort because I discovered that Being Honest with My Self is a most difficult task due to my less than complete comprehension of my mind. So, how to get to know my mind? Well, at that time I decided to check myself out, you know, to see how I was doing, and from this evaluation I anticipated being able to develop a study plan to get up to speed. So the next step was to come up with some concept of what is my mind.

In my study I kept coming across the statement, “We only use about 10% of our brain.” Wow! So this implied that I am operating at about 10% of my potential, leaving me 90% short of “Being up and Running.” No wonder I was struggling for so long with life and with understanding my mind. How could I possibly comprehend my mind with only 10% of it being available to me? Well I did my best with what I had and I began to at least identify some of its parts. Initially with the study of some psychology and fairly recently neuro-psychology I grasped that there is a neighborhood of mind-aspects residing between my ears. I guess the easiest aspect to recognize is the “I” or “Me” aspect that is called Ego. There then is the conscious mind that deals with the here and now. Seen as the hidden mind is the subtle subconscious mind that acts to process puzzling events, keeps the body running, stores emotions and feelings, filters our intake of experiences, houses attitudes to protect us against pain and suffering, releases impulsive behavior, and houses memory some of which is accessible and other memories disconnected and develops neuronets for learning new patterns and the skills for their application. There is also a culturally denied part of the mind that is made up of telepathy, premonition, gut-feelings, etc. Then there is the mysterious super-conscious mind that relates to spirituality, which houses intuition, insight, creativity, awareness, a sense of overview, the ability to promote coordination of the mind parts, and seeks to connect to and to integrate within The Whole.

In my effort to grasp my mind I came to realize that all of these elements of my mind were operating somewhat independently due to the cultural influence of individuality and this gave rise to unintended conflict. Too often we were working against each other, but not on purpose. With the help of Spirit, that being the super-consciousness of our being we began to consult with each other. We concluded this disarray was likely due to cultural interference fostered by the aspect of culture that taught that it was all about Survival of the Fittest through dominance of the weak. It fostered the belief that Nature was to be conquered and made subservient to human wishes. This attitude, failing to teach that everything is interconnected had inadvertently acted as the prime role model that our family of mind-aspects imitated in growing up. Every part out for itself with no coordination and failing to have a “manager,” this resulted in anarchy and conflict and competition for attention and dominance. Sad. It made it impossible to listen to the advice each segment was desperately trying to make heard. This gave rise to me to often saying, “I wished that I had listened to myself.”

Eventually, with some gift of maturity, Spiritual Mind suggested that we would benefit from being able to connect in such a manner that would enable us to converse at will with each other. We all seemed to acknowledge that we were all pretty tired of the disharmony and confusion. This miraculously led us to a general agreement to enhance cooperation and communication. We started the process by imaging personalities with names for each of our parts so that we could all get to know each other, discuss our strengths and weaknesses and seek insight as to how to work more consciously as a team. We continue this work to this day. There has been some progress and this is allowing us to even write this article.

To really grasp the inhibition that Culture places on us, the team came up with the benefit of listening to Consciousness and to learn from what it has to share about itself and its role in our collective mind. In this I took notes and here I am presenting a somewhat objective evaluative platform of the variables of Consciousness.

A. Lived Values of Truth = Consciousness

1. Honesty
2. Kindness
3. Compassion
4. Identifying with the general welfare of my social setting
5. Sharing resources so all have the basics of life
6. Sharing knowledge in an empathetic manner
7. Sharing knowledge according to the others ability to learn
8. Open to learning from anyone
9. Empathetic in all my relationships
10. Encouraging
11. Protective of the weak
12. Team player
13. Open to constructive criticism
14. Willing to respect others with different opinions and backgrounds
15. Respectful of Traditions and its meaning to others
16. Understanding other people's level of awareness
17. Insightful to the complexities of life
18. Open to asking for and receiving help
19. An advocate for those less fortunate
20. Able to introduce complimentary perspectives
21. Intuitive
22. A capable listener
23. Able to defend myself intellectually, physically and spiritually
24. Protective of the environment
25. Respectful of my body
26. Flexible
27. Patient
28. Able to handle stress
29. Inclusive
30. Friendly
31. Able to manage my emotions
32. Meditative
32. Viewing everything and everyone as part of the Whole and interconnected
33. Open to the experience of Transition

So, being as honest as possible we were able to get a feeling as to how we were doing. Not surprisingly we were doing Okay in some areas, not so well in some, and not at all in well in others. Following this we spent many years getting our Self into shape. Recognizing the values that make Consciousness so admirable was a great step into who we are in the sense of a Team-Being. However recognizing these values did not spontaneously download the skill-sets required to live them. So we began an effort to research what skill-sets were required to integrate and manifest these values and after a number of years we had begun to recognize the skill-sets and went about teaching them

to our collective Self. At some point, sometime during our late 50's and we just turned 72, we plateaued out at a fairly competent level. Yes, room for more, but at that time in life, good enough.

Working with diligence to upgrade our skills so that we could live more fully in Consciousness the team came to realize that this is all well and good, yet there were influences still outside of our awareness that acted as a countering force. Eventually, with a certain depth of extended focus we came to feel that we had not paid enough attention to grasping the full impact of Culture upon our development. Feeling this to be valid we were motivated to get an indepth feeling for Culture and its influence on us. So as we did with our personal development we decided to spend some time focusing on Culture and see if we could come up with a more concrete concept of it and its influence. Here's what we came up with:

A. Culture Defined for this exploration:

1. A unique inclusive group identity
2. A unique group of values
3. A unique mode of expression
 - a. Speech/language
 - b. Posture, Style of movement
 - c. Facial Expressions
 - d. Art Forms
 - e. Food Preferences and styles of cooking
 - f. Humor
4. Social Values, Experiences and Expression = Acceptable Behavior that varied as one grew through life and also seemed to vary according to gender.
 - a. Influencing Variables
 1. Form of Play
 2. Early childhood stories
 3. Religious interpretation and teaching
 4. Style of Martial Arts
 5. Dress, makeup, figurative markings
 6. Education
 7. Art, Song, Dance, etc.
 - b. The form of Acquisition and sharing of resources
 - c. The Development and Use of Technology
 - d. Spirituality

While these general categories in place we spent well into our 60's exploring and assimilating the amazing complexity of culture. Still with this improving awareness we came to understand that to really get into how our culture manifests we have to be aware of the counter influences that create conflict with Truth as defined above. Quite simply this was what we concluded.

A. Inhibitors of Consciousness

1. Culture
 - a. Binding Forces:

1. The drive for Identity and its maintenance: Perpetuation of One Perspective
2. Psychology
 - a. Humans experiencing The Need and its Compulsion to fit in.

If Consciousness is the living of the Values of Truth, then to us it seems that in general, Consciousness is at least partially blocked as a result of the Overwhelming Conflict between the Restrictive and Exclusionary Nature of Culture and the Flexible and Expansive Nature of Truth. Being born into this culture and living within it during our childhood it was natural that we would be “programmed” without any awareness and therefore with no say in the matter. As a result of this we were fairly blinded to the Truth as defined above. Still, as powerful as the brain-programming influence of culture we began to increasingly experience something deeper within the core of us and likely all beings, which for us was innately aligned with The Truth. This deeper core element of our being is common within all individualized aspects of the All. It is the common thread that acts as our bonding agent. It is beyond the influence of any one’s culture, being that all cultures are fabricated within any group human consciousness. Should any being start to feel the resonating vibration of our essential nature then that is when they begin the journey to the source of the sound of Life where all parts of life experience being The Whole. Yet it is confusing as where we can feel the unifying threads to all of nature, it remains so much more challenging to feel that thread with people who seek to dominate others or other cultures. I guess there has to be these types of people in order for a Culture to maintain its sense of self and safety. They are like the culture’s immune system and they are positioned to attack and deflect any influence that would alter the culture.

These insights guided us, our team, to increasingly grasp that Culture acts as an inhibitor of Truth as Culture inherently drives for Individual Identity and its continued Maintenance. But how does it do this? Then with an insight so revealing we began to see that the creative and binding force of Culture is its native language. So our team truly began to delve deeper into language and its function beyond providing a medium for communication. In this exploration it began to become clear that each culture’s native language is the manner through which a culture downloads itself into a newborn much like a baby absorbing the life energy by nursing from its mother’s milk. Working hard to understand language in our modern time we came up with using the analogy of computers. We began to see a culture’s language actually as its Operating System. How many of us have ever thought of English or any spoken language as an Operating System? We couldn’t help but to wonder as to the influence of English in the way we interact with others. Is there something in English, our culture’s OS that enhances or deflates cooperation between people? The deeper we looked at English as an OS we began to sense a specific difference between an OS for a human language and an OS for a computer. While we occasionally get updates from our computer’s developers of the Operating System; each update correcting or enhancing aspects of the previous generation of the OS, in English, our Cultural OS, we don’t have that benefit of getting updates that correct areas of linguistic dysfunction. In fact there is no one to report such shortcomings. So it came to us, what if the source of conflict is actually the English language which seemed to do fairly well in the physical world of science and problem solving, but some how had a glitch that made it cumbersome, indefinite, and unyielding

when used interpersonally where feelings were involved. Now, this isn't to say that this is not a common experience in other languages. Then we began to wonder if all the languages of the world were somehow evaluated would some of them have certain characteristics that promoted cooperative relationships compared to others that fostered more of competition resulting in conflict. We couldn't help but then wonder wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone had the choice of which language to use in our interpersonal relationships based upon such a survey, or even format a language that combined the best elements from all other languages.

Looking ever more deeply into our English language, our OS, it seemed to manifest our culture's commitment to Science and Technology, which requires an aspect of duality in order to manipulate resources into functioning products. For example, the duality of heating and cooling water in the process of creating a functional shower so that the hot and cold water can be mixed to create a middle temperature that is pleasing. To bad we can't evolve a means of introducing the concept of the shower in politics so that the duality of Republicans and Democrats can work together to provide the people with a balanced viewpoint that would support a competent government. Socially, without the governing concept of the shower such a Duality initiates a conflictual attitude that fosters debate that polarizes people into different camps and evolves into being the integral means within our culture that increasingly establishes the fight for dominance of one point of view. Should we be aware of these aspects of our Cultural OS we might be able to consciously manage that which fosters this compulsion for Duality so that it doesn't have to foster the mystery of why loving relationships so often end up in a power struggle or why even government becomes so polarized as to be dysfunctional.

Personally by our team acknowledging that our cultural OS fosters conflict through it predominant emphasis on the need for duality to sustain the scientific approach, we as our team have become more competent in defusing our competing attitudes that had been leading to conflict and as a result have been enhancing our Free Will and Choice. Instead of promoting or defending our perspective and/or challenging each other or any other person's viewpoint, we choose to show a heightened interest in our various points of view seeking to comprehend their origin and its intended impact on our shared social experience. With this shift in Consciousness, people with whom we typically had difficulty began to perceive our honest interest in the importance of their point of view with the result that they seemed to feel increasingly safe and secure. Not always, but at times they allowed for their deflation of the cultural compulsion to be right.

This evolving awareness and skill fostered a boost in our ability to process and incorporate their point of view into what we now call The Assembly of Views. By doing so this approach contributes to our ability to more fully synthesize and thereby grasp increased elements of The Whole. This integration was not just in their expression of their point of view. For the first time this allowed their point of view to be enhanced with the context of the human element of the circumstances and feelings that lead them to their point of view in light of how it assisted them to manage the conflicts of life.

While we now had the insight as to the influence of Culture, we continued to stumble. For a long time I have advocated for change along with others such as we did during the struggle for Civil Rights for the disenfranchised, for Peace during the Vietnam War, for Women's Rights, to end the wars in the Middle East, for fair immigration

reform, for a living wage, and for Gay Rights including the Right to Marriage. Throughout our work career we were deeply involved with advocating for our clients that we served in the field of mental health. We understood the value of being aggressive at times to gain the attention of the political and work administrations, which without being threatened will continue to live a life of advantage without any effort to ameliorate the inequities within society or the workplace. However, there was more that was required, but what? We then had the insight that we would need to be able to form a sharing relationship with the power elite in order to have some spiritual influence on their personal development. Eventually this insight brought us to the awareness that something in our handling of the insights had yet to be incorporated.

We needed to develop the maturity to approach the culture on multiple levels, which act in concert to achieve our desired outcome of Culture becoming more diverse in an integrated manner so that the Whole which is Greater than its Parts can come into being. So, we worked on living the consciousness by studying and implementing the skill to also communicate in a non-threatening manner. This meant to no longer be only running around disclaiming and denigrating the American culture for its limitations. We came into the realization that our manner needed to be subtle and accommodating in relationship with the dominant culture in order to have any hope of entering a positive role-modeling relationship. We must admit that some of “Me” still resonates with the more aggressive manner of civil disobedience, as peaceful demonstrations are not always allowed to remain peaceful. However at this time we feel that by living quietly and in a non-threatening way allows us to walk the walk of compassion and patience and this projects that we are one of many and that because we are all connected that there may be a lasting benefit should we all open up a bit more. So we have to keep our focus on our self as well as on our Culture and do more work in fine-tuning, work that is essential to moving our self into an increased state of harmony in most situations.

From this point we, the team, bent our will to more completely focus on personally evolving within the Consciousness that in fact everything is interconnected. Eventually this allowed us to live with a greater sense of Awareness and in doing so the Interconnectedness of Life increasingly permeates how we filter life. There has been some growth as demonstrated by the following. If someone disagrees with one of our points of view or if we start to negatively react to their point of view we are now able to hit an internal pause button, which allows us time to initiate the elevation of our vision of the outcome we seek, that being unity, and this guides us in redirecting our interaction with the other person(s).

We also learned that when we are interested in sharing our point of view we benefit from anticipating the likelihood of their feelings of vulnerability, which can lead quickly to misunderstanding and reactive interaction. As a collective consciousness we have worked hard to develop the sensitivity that allows us to gauge as to what degree what we would like to share may challenge their foundation of beliefs. In doing so we are more able to moderate our sharing to stay within their limits of vulnerability and safety. While we may see it as an expanding experience when we are presenting a different point of view, we remember that most people are fragile, and the more fragile they are the more quickly they will jump to erroneous conclusions. This ability or set of skills to be empathetic is critical to living consciously, for this guides us in our sharing. This level of respect for the other person and their point of view supports the balancing of our

relationship so that the person feels that they are sharing with someone who not only shows interest, but also manifests a sense of care for them as a fellow human being. This enhances Unity, which is the intent of a shared Consciousness. We at times also share that while we are very interested in their expression we are mostly seeking to understand how it fits into the Whole. This prevents them from concluding that because we show interest we believe that their perspective is correct, and other perspectives are incorrect. We feel that this declaration is only reasonably feasible when a level of trust has been established.

Being open to a sharing of viewpoints we are very attuned to the value of being a good listener. This also allows us to be compassionate and patient with people regardless of their beliefs. This ability also communicates a desire to understand without judgment and this also seems to act to diminish the Cultural Compulsion to defend the strict and conservative elements that define culture. The Outcome of this allows us to gain the other person's respect and supports our effort to live peacefully within an ever-expanding Consciousness.

Culture is of course critical to humans and it is the basic form of society. Yet because each Culture is unique, its very individualized nature is the cause of the separation between the peoples of the World that leads to conflict and the imbalance of power between them. Still, this article is about the intricacies of Culture and how it can place a barrier between the individual, in this case me/us, and the Truth. The Truth is that we are all parts of the Whole. Unless we get along, it's just like in our physical bodies where unless all the cells work as a team there is illness. So too for the People of our Earth, conflict between cultures is a sign that we are living in a weak state of consciousness.

For those of us who feel the beckoning of the inner most depths of our spiritual being, it is a journey from the moment of birth to learn how to be part of our culture into which we are born. In accommodating Culture in a respectful manner this allows us at times to infuse an expansion that touches the Spirit that encompasses all of Life.